



CULEBRA CUT, EMPIRE. VIEW LOOKING NORTH FROM WEST BANK NEAR CUNETTA. THE EXCAVATION IN THE FOREGROUND IS DOWN TO GRADE; I. E. AT ELEVATION + 40.

New Orleans and the Panama Canal

By M. B. TRUZYANT,
Secretary-Manager New Orleans Progressive Union.

With the Panama Canal 150 miles directly to the south, nearer by 60 miles than New York, and standing as the nearest great American seaport to Colon, New Orleans has been putting her hand in order for fifteen years in advance to reap the reward of its natural advantages. How this has been done is an example of civic patriotism and far-sighted vision that even New York, with its preponderating influence, has found necessary to follow. For New Orleans, of all the seaports of the United States, was the first to take possession, with a resolute hand, of its great harbor facilities and the extent and character of its municipality-owned waterfront and best railroad switching terminals is a monument to the sagacity of the men who had the spirit and audacity to take time by the forelock and prevent the control of its greatest asset as a seaport, by private interests. A few weeks ago New York announced that it would expend \$500,000 in the acquisition of its own waterfront terminals and this sum will go to pay for only a small part of its great harbor frontage. In New Orleans, for fifteen years, the city has been steadily and resolutely building up its waterfront and its harbor facilities, and it has done so with the aid of the city's own resources. But for many years private interests have been from the municipality until people saw the folly of a policy that permitted the municipality of its greatest asset, terminated the lease and entered into a period of municipal ownership in which every citizen is a direct stockholder. From that date the port facilities at New Orleans took an upward turn and today, with an expenditure of only some \$415,000, the wharves of the city are covered with modern steel fireproof sheds to protect the cargo. The shipping has been reduced to a minimum for the dock board is operated not for profit but to serve all comers on an equal basis and at a minimum cost. In this manner was taken the first step to prepare New Orleans as a seaport to profit by her proximity to the Panama Canal.

Public Belt Railroad.
But that was not all. When the merchants and exporters found that railroad and shipping terminal facilities behind the wharves were needed to complete the conjunction, they determined upon another venture which, as in the case of all innovations, was hooted at by the skeptic and fought by the private transportation interests. These latter honestly thought they saw a real menace to their and the city's best interests, but to-day the Public Belt Railroad of New Orleans, running with double tracks immediately behind the public

wharves, and reaching, by switch and spur, to manufacturing plants, shipping establishments, warehouses, and tropical railroads has come to be regarded by the railroads themselves as their chief safeguard from competition and the extension of lines more advantageously situated. So admirable has the utility been that it has been a non-partisan commission, composed of delegates representing all four commercial exchanges, and those represented at large, that even the switching charge is abolished in the rate, and while its best years of usefulness are still ahead of it, the Public Belt Railroad has proved a public benefactor to the commerce of New Orleans.

Great Public Warehouse.
These then the publicly owned and operated wharves and the publicly owned and operated belt railroad, which for many years in actual operation from the foundation upon which rest the future development and security of the port of New Orleans. More extensive still, however, are the plans of those who have not been restricted to the mere present. Acting upon the authority given by a constitutional amendment to the State laws, a

Publicly Owned Lighterage Service.
Still another great public utility is on the cards for New Orleans, and while

these plans have not been adopted, they ultimately will be. Reference is had to a system of municipally owned harbor lighterage, operated as a part of the Public Belt Railroad, just as the public warehouse system will be operated by the public dock board.

The New Orleans plan will differ from that in New York and other ports only in that it will be owned by the public and operated not for profit, but to reduce the port and handling charges to a minimum. New Orleans has, on both sides of the river, some thirty miles of harbor frontage, every foot of which will ultimately be covered by municipal sheds, backed by municipal belt railroad, served by municipal lighters, and facilitated by municipal warehouses, the two presently operating branches of which have already demonstrated their unquestioned title to precedence as the most successfully publicly owned port facilities on the American continent.

Pure Public Water.
Not content with providing the shipping of the world with economic utilities, the people of New Orleans decided they would directly benefit every one of its individual units, human and otherwise, and voted to tax themselves \$200,000 for a publicly owned system of water, sewerage and drainage. For the first it had the vast and inexhaustible volume of the Mississippi River itself to draw from. For a century or so New Orleans had drunk either the rain water from surface cisterns or tanks, or the mud-water, brought from a private monopoly at outrageous prices, and filtered privately and at private expense. Two years ago the great municipal filtration plant was completed and put into operation with a capacity of 30,000,000 gallons per day. The muddy Mississippi still forms the source of supply, but when it rushes with force from the taps of private householders, it is as clear as crystal and as pure as any water in any city in the world. Not only that, but it is actually 60 per cent cheaper than the old mud-water supplied at low pressure by the private monopoly. The citizens of New Orleans to-day enjoy not only what is equal to the best, but perhaps the cheapest water in the United States. Not only has the expense and use of this pure, clean public water proven a boon to public health, for typhoid is almost unknown in New Orleans and the death rate is reducing annually, but it has caused an economic saving in the cost of fire hazard both to the insurer in the form of reduced loss and to the insured in reduced premiums. Formerly the mud clogged the fire hydrants and made the work of the fire department abortive. Now the initial pressure alone frequently obviates the necessity for auxiliary engine energy.

Drainage and Sewerage.
Corollary to the water are the drainage and sewerage systems, both potential in the matter of health, and entering into the business economy of the city. Ten years ago not a cellar or basement

existed in New Orleans. The soil was too moist. Nor were there tall buildings. Today every new skyscraper has its cellar, a double illustration of the virtue of drainage, for the subsoil has been dried out and both cellars and heavy buildings are a matter of common construction now.

Sewerage of the most modern and improved type adds its quota to health and happiness, and under the law modern sanitary connections are compulsory and the sewerage, which formerly went into creeks, polluted the earth and spread disease, is now carried off and emptied into the Mississippi River, far below the city, forty feet beneath the surface, and where the river is some two hundred feet in depth.

Commercial Exploitation.
In dealing with the foregoing—publicly owned wharves, belt railroad, warehouses, lighterage, water, drainage, and sewerage—my object was to clearly point out where New Orleans had laid the broad foundation for commercial supremacy by supplying the fundamental facilities through which her economic development will come. These facilities have prepared the way for the individual and private interests, which will use New Orleans as a base of operations for the expansion of their self-interest in which the community as a whole will take its share.

Within the past year three events of the utmost significance have come to pass, and which demonstrate the fact that there have been some to quickly realize their opportunity, and as quickly take advantage of it. The Texas and Pacific Railroad, part of the great Gould system, has acquired some twenty square miles of ground in the warehouse district of New Orleans, just behind the wharves and belt railroad, and is now spending upward of \$10,000,000 in great terminals, supplementing its private terminals in Jefferson Parish, a few miles up the river. This railroad did not see, but foresaw, the handwriting on the wall, and the words "New Orleans is the Mississippi Valley Gateway to the East" had been spelled out in large letters.

This did the vision of great railroad operators concentrate upon and determine an important economic fact and set about with preparations to capitalize their foresight.

The other indication of significance is the announcement only just made that the enormous exporting firm of W. R. Grace & Co., perhaps the largest of its kind in the world, had opened in New Orleans for the purpose of developing more extensively its already large trade in Central and South America, for, with New Orleans in easy reach of the west coast of these two countries, a large part of that business now done out of San Francisco will be handled out of New Orleans.

Still another feature of great significance is the big strides being made in the reclamation and development of the wet lands of Southern Louisiana, particularly in the immediate vicinity of New Orleans. With some 10,000,000 acres of reclaimable marsh lands, the richness of which is made up of the richness of soils from thirty-six States in the Union which have built up the Mississippi delta, the reclamation of Louisiana lands

is one of the economic features of modern times. Lands may be reclaimed and put on the market for an average of \$20 an acre and sold for \$200 and up, and will grow crops twelve months in the year. Louisiana has nearly 5,000 miles of navigable waters and, as most of them are located in the lower section of the State, the reclamation of lands, with its necessary canalization, brings navigation with it as a natural corollary; and transportation by water, cheap and safe, from the farm to the market. And backing up this pioneer work comes the announcement just made that a syndicate known as the Louisiana Company, composed of bank presidents and capitalists of New Orleans, has been organized for the purpose of putting settlers on the lands; an enormous, highly financed, thoroughly practical scheme of legitimate exploitation and colonization and development, which will give to New Orleans that immediate suburban population which is necessary to its upbuilding and which, in selling its products to and through New Orleans, will create a vast, unimagined market for the manufactured articles of the city.

Thus have I endeavored to show that New Orleans, at every point, has taken advanced steps to capitalize her proximity to the Panama Canal, from municipal ownership of public utilities, to private activity in making the best use of the courageous foresight of her people.

MATTHEW J. LONG.

Criminal Sheriff, Parish of Orleans.

The office of criminal sheriff of the Parish of Orleans has been intrusted to efficient hands in Matthew J. Long, whose successful career here and previous public service have most thoroughly demonstrated his ability to fill the position. The growth and increased importance of Orleans Parish have added to the amount and details of the duties falling on her officials, and rendered it absolutely necessary that only conservative men of experience and proven capacity be intrusted with the duties of administering her affairs. It is generally conceded that Sheriff Matthew J. Long, the criminal sheriff of the Parish of Orleans, is one of the most popular citizens of the Third Ward. He was born March 5, 1855, and was educated at St. Joseph's and St. Mary's Colleges, finishing his studies at the Jesuit College. The sheriff was engaged among the cotton houses for quite a few years. When he reached man's estate he took an active part in the politics of the regular Democratic party. He has been honored with several public service positions from time to time. Under John Fitzpatrick's administration he was a wardwager and held the same position under Peter Farrell. He served for four years as one of the port commissioners. He is an Elk and a member of the Knights of Columbus.



HON. MARTIN BEHRMAN
Mayor of New Orleans

Martin Behrman has spent his entire life in New Orleans. He rose from the ranks, and can compare his success favorably with any other man of his city.

He began his political career when he became a member of the school board many years ago. Since then he has served consecutively as clerk of the City Council, assessor, State auditor, and Mayor. He was elected chairman of the Board of Commissioners when New Orleans adopted the commission form of government, on December 1, 1912.

Born in New York, the son of Henry and Fredericka Behrman, he was brought to New Orleans at the age of one year. He managed to secure a good education, and fluently speaks German and French. When quite young he began his career as a retail clerk. He was later a representative of a wholesale house, and has served in various other capacities since.

He married Miss Julia Collins, of New Orleans, in 1887. They have two children, William Stanley, and Mary Helen. Mayor Behrman has always been active in fraternal circles and club life of New Orleans. His membership is now claimed by the Elks, Knights of Columbus, Druids, Moose, Buffaloes, Woodmen of the World, Southern Yacht Club, New Orleans Progressive Union, and other similar organizations. The feature of Mr. Behrman's political career has been his persistent fight for municipal and civic improvements.